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THE HONGKONG DISPENSARY.
Established A.D. 1861.

Hongkong 11th September, 1904.

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DEATH.

On the 28th instant, at his residence, 10, Robinson Road, at 11.30 a.m., DOMINGO DE CRUZ, aged 22.

The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, SEPTEMBER 29th, 1904.

One thing, the discussion on the proposed wholesale burning of Tsingtau has shown in the minds of the members of the Legislative Council to be a matter of some importance.

Had Sir G. T. M. O'Brien been here we would at least have given a sensible statement of the reasons on which the burning is advocated, but the Government appears to possess no other officer capable of doing so.

The Governor himself simply says that some time ago he accepted the recommendations of certain committees, and he asks if he can be expected now to reconsider his decision.

Whether His Excellency has endeavored to weigh for himself the arguments placed before him in favour of burning out the whole district and sparing not a single house, or has doubtless accepted the recommendations without troubling himself to study the question in any degree, does not appear; all he tells the Council, and through it the public, is that he has come to a decision he does not intend to reconsider it.

Then the Hon. N. G. Mitchell, I think, says the houses must be burnt because before they were cleaned they were very dirty.

The Hon. H. K. W. on this occasion has thrown in his lot with the Government, saying that he is mortal man and cannot be sure of anything, but that those who have recommended that the sanitary houses in the district should be sacrificed with the insanitary ones firmly believe the plague will thereby be got rid of.

As to the grounds of this belief the hon. member was as silent as the Governor. Such a feeble exhibition of debating power has, we should think, never before been seen in any legislative assembly.

Was it sheer incompetence that caused the advocates of total burning to refrain from giving reasons for their opinion, or were they in the humour of Falstaff when he said that if reasons were plenty as blackberries he would give you a reason upon compulsion?

The real reasons on which the burning has been recommended to the Government are, we believe, somewhat as follows: If it is assumed that the habit of the plague bacillus is in the soil, and that under favourable atmospheric conditions it attacks animals and man, causing an epidemic, but that even in times when there is no disease present the bacillus is still living and propagating in the soil and ready for another attack on human life when circumstances move its energy in that direction.

Consequently, on this hypothesis, if the bacillus once gets into the soil of a place, and having got there is allowed to remain, the danger of plague breaking out is permanent.

The disease may be communicated by contagion from person to person in places where the soil remains undisturbed, but where that is the case the danger is not in the soil, but in the person, and even in times when there is no disease present the bacillus is still living and propagating in the soil and ready for another attack on human life when circumstances move its energy in that direction.

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